

SAARC

# Melancholy Voters

Deepak Gujrel reports on Nepali voters' lack of enthusiasm in electing their Parliament

Nepalis appear to be less enthusiastic than in the past in electing their Parliament, angry as they are with successive governments for failing to help raise the quality of their lives.

The first round of elections on Monday saw a voter turnout of 55 per cent compared to 61 per cent in the last election in 1994 and 65 per cent in the country's first parliamentary election in 1991.

Ninety constituencies in 35 districts participated in Monday's round in which 977 candidates were in the fray. In the second round, on May 16, voters will elect the electoral colleges of 1,247 candidates. The country has a total electorate of 13.5 million.

Though this is only the third election in the Himalayan kingdom since the introduction of multi-party parliamentary polity after a successful mass movement in 1990, there is a singular lack of voter enthusiasm.

"There is no hope of a people-oriented government after this election also," felt many other Kathmandu voters who chose not to exercise their franchise.

"Powermongers and corrupts have perverted politics and the people's interests have been put aside," said one voter.

Observers note that most political parties which have been in power at some point or the other have shied away from asking for a decisive mandate in their favour.

The ruling coalition partners, the Nepali Congress and Communist Party of Nepal-United Marxist Leninist (CPN-UML), have pleaded for a simple majority, but have not been able to ask for a majority for themselves, all too aware that voters are angry with politicians in general.

"Due to their corrupt characters, they have lost moral ground to ask the people for a majority," says senior journalist Mani Raj Upadhyaya.

The first round of polling passed off peacefully despite threats of disruption by Maoists. Reports from the 12 "most sensitive" constituencies in the northwestern hills, a stronghold of the Maoists, said the election passed off peacefully.

— India Abroad News Service

# For a Fresh Mandate

India is headed for its longest caretaker government, reports Liz Mathew from New Delhi

INDIA, which saw five governments in three years, may be headed for the longest rule by a caretaker government if, as is widely expected, the Election Commission (EC) decides to hold the next general election in September rather than in June-July.

The record rule by the caretaker government of Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee, expected to be nearly six months, has sparked a debate among political leaders and constitutional experts about its status, powers and decision-making abilities. More so, as the Constitution does not provide for any caretaker government.

There have been several caretaker governments in the past — Charan Singh's government in 1979, Chandrabhai Sheth's in 1993 and I.K. Gujral's government in 1997. None of them was, however, in power for long and their role was mostly confined to holding fort till the next election was conducted.

While precedents have been established, there is still no clear understanding of the limits of a caretaker government's authority. Going by conventional wisdom, a caretaker is not supposed to take any major policy decision or make commitments that may be binding on a successor government. Yet, there are those who differ. "We are a government in office and there is no ambiguity over the issue. The Constitution does not provide for a caretaker government and we are expected to take all decisions to protect national interests," Pramod Mahajan, federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting and the government spokesman, told reporters last week.

Parliamentary Affairs Minister Rangarajan Kumararaman was in agreement, saying there was nothing to prevent the Vajpayee government from "doing the best it can." He, however, admitted that it would be undemocratic for the caretaker government to take decisions on behalf of the nation at a time when the Lok Sabha, Parliament's lower house, stands dissolved.

Adding to the confusion was a Cabinet decision last week which indicated that the Vajpayee government would function as a "regular government." Senior advocate Rajeev Dhawan was quite disturbed by the decision and was quoted as calling it "extremely mischievous and dangerous, and it (the government) is best advised to soften its stance and behave with neutrality."

The debate is likely to intensify if the caretaker government issues an ordinance to open up the insurance sector to private players. Finance Minister Yashwant Sinha suggested in his address at the annual meeting of the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) that there would be no impropriety involved in such a move as the Insurance Regulatory Authority (IRA) Bill had received the cabinet's assent before the fall of the Vajpayee government.

Those who believe the Vajpayee government does not have the authority to take major decisions point out that it has been voted out of office.

Its status is thus quite different from the one enjoyed by then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in 1971, when she recommended the dissolution of

the Lok Sabha to seek a fresh mandate. "She could function as a regular government since she had a majority in Parliament," Jaipal Reddy, former Information and Broadcasting Minister, told India Abroad News Service.

Congress Party leader Shivaraj Patil, a former Speaker of the Lok Sabha, stressed this was an important point. According to him, with a caretaker government, the President can exercise more powers. When a government loses its majority, the President may see whether the executive functions in accordance with the Constitution. He can send directions to the Council of Ministers," he pointed out. Former Prime Minister I.K. Gujral, who headed a caretaker government for three months in 1997-98, is, however, of the view that questions about such a government's powers were created by the media. He said the powers of any government — whether caretaker or not — were the same.

"There is nothing to prevent the Vajpayee government from taking decisions of long-standing import," Gujral told IANS. He pointed out that, as caretaker Prime Minister, he had held important discussions with French President Jacques Chirac on nuclear policy.

Although the Vajpayee government can issue an ordinance in what it deems to be an emergency situation, the President can send it back not just once, as in the case of a regular government, but can also withhold his signature till the next government is in place. Where ordinances are concerned, in the case of a caretaker government, "the President is not bound by the advice of the Council of Ministers, unlike the norm," K.K. Venugopal, a Constitutional expert and leading advocate, said.

The President's role as custodian of the Constitution ends as soon as the election is announced. Once that happens, the guidelines issued by the Election Commission come into play. The Commission can ask the government to withdraw decisions which it feels might sway the electorate.

"The Election Commission can interfere only when there is a violation of its code of conduct. Legally also, action can be taken," Patil pointed out.

The Vajpayee government's decision today to transfer 11 top bureaucrats, including Home (Interior) Secretary B.P. Singh — has added fuel to the debate, with Patil contending that the government "should not reshuffle the bureaucracy in such a manner that people doubt their motives. It is not good."

A way out of all such dilemmas would be for the government to take the opposition into confidence while taking any decisions, they have to act in a different manner. They have to consult the opposition and evolve a consensus," P.J. Kurien, chief whip of the Congress party, said.

The debate is likely to lose steam if the Election Commission schedules the general election for June or July. The issue will be quickly forgotten in the heat and dust of the summer campaign. If, however, the election is scheduled for August or September, the limits of the caretaker government's powers will be truly tested.

— India Abroad News Service

THE Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, which prohibits testing of nuclear devices, and which is the most significant non-proliferation global agreement of this century, has become a deep forbidden sea for both India and Pakistan, who after having jumped into it, are now floundering to get out.

Signals from India are that Delhi, which always had reservations on the CTBT, may not sign the Treaty before September of this year, the deadline by which the Treaty has to have signature of all the 44 countries who have not signed it to become enforceable. Pakistan's foreign minister Sartaj Aziz too has issued a statement indicating that his government too is having second thoughts about the Treaty even though Pakistani prime minister in his speech September last year in Geneva had expressed his willingness to come on CTBT board before the deadline expires.

While India's excuse for dilly-dallying on the CTBT is that it had never said openly that it would sign the Treaty by September, in case of Pakistan second thoughts are coming crowding in because of tactical and policy reasons making Islamabad's position difficult.

The Pakistani prime minister during his press conference in Washington last year explained that Pakistan's agreement to sign the CTBT was conditional upon "removal of coercive environment". And he came close to linking the signing of the CTBT with the resolution of the Kashmir issue and lifting of all sanctions against Pakistan by the United States.

This prompted Karl Denfert, Assistant Secretary of State for South Asian Affairs, to repeat the US position at a State Department. "We have no reason to believe," he said, "that the prime minister's assurance at the United Nations is any different from that made on Thursday." He thus dismissed the so-called new linkage between the CTBT, Kashmir and the lifting of the sanctions.

This appeared to cloud Pakistan's stand on the CTBT in the glut of official rhetoric about removal of coercion as a pre-condition for signing

Washington seems to have made it clear that Islamabad should not expect to be rewarded before it has signed the CTBT, writes Syed Talat Hussain

Treaty. This slogan in the vocabulary of the Foreign Office has been repeated since at different forums and by responsible members of the Sharif government. The Prime Minister, apart from the foreign minister, the foreign minister of state, the information minister, himself has of late been keenly insisting on the right kind of environment, free of coercion, for Pakistan to sign the CTBT.

But the Sharif government had to stick to this slogan because this what the prime minister said at the UN General Assembly. He had made it clear that Pakistan "is prepared to adhere to the CTBT before September 1999 Conference... However Pakistan's adherence to the Treaty was to take place only in 'conditions free from coercion or pressure.' By this what was meant was that Pakistan expected that the arbitrary restrictions imposed on Pakistan by multilateral institutions would be speedily removed; that discriminatory sanctions against Pakistan would be lifted; and that the world community would give full support for a just solution of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute. For these reasons the Sharif government is still waiting to see the US Administration lift more sanctions, including those imposed under the Pressler Amendment.

However, the US seems to be approaching the issue from exactly the opposite angle. Unambiguous statements from US officials about the need for Pakistan to take further concrete measures on non-proliferation prove this. These are Washington's pre-conditions before it delivers on the lifting of the sanctions and on facilitating financial assistance package from multinational donor agencies.

This creates a tough diplomatic situation for the Sharif government. It has taken its public rhetoric of no signing without removal of coercion to a level that it will be hugely difficult for it to wind down. But at the same time Washington seems to have also

# In Sea of CTBT

made it clear that Islamabad should not expect to be rewarded before it has signed the CTBT, writes Syed Talat Hussain

Some informed American observers are of the opinion that even after Pak-

istan has signed and ratified the CTBT many of the sanctions will remain in place. They say that these sanctions were in place for nearly a decade even on the mere suspicion of Pakistan having a nuclear device. But now that Pakistan is a declared nuclear power and the Bill Clinton Administration will face an impossible situation in Congress in trying to make a case for the total lifting of all sanctions.

If these assessments are correct then even at the end

of the CTBT tunnel Pakistan might not find the type of reward it is looking for. The crucial question now is whether the Sharif government will continue to wait for the Bill Clinton Administration to lift more sanctions and wait and see India's stand before it signs the CTBT. Or should it wait under increasing pressure and sign the CTBT in the hope of wresting more concessions from Washington in addition to the partial easing of sanctions.

If it chooses the first course of action, it runs the risk of

creating tensions in its critical ties with Washington, which wants Islamabad to come on CTBT board before September 1999. If it opts for the second it loses face at home for changing a position it has been solidifying through its rhetoric and slogans.

Perhaps a middle course can be to announce a date of signing the CTBT prior to September 1999 and expect the US to make further concessions without looking towards what India is doing on the issue. But even this will be a compromise solution will entail costs for the Sharif government already under fire from the Opposition for having shown too much flexibility on the nuclear issue.

# Thimpu Joins Digital Club

Bhutan becomes the Asian nation with digital telecommunications

BHUTAN has taken a quantum leap towards modernisation, becoming the third Asian nation to have a sophisticated digital telecommunications system, even as it boasts of a new Indian-built terminal at Paro airport.

The tiny Himalayan kingdom joined Singapore and Hong Kong as the only Asian states to have a fully digital telecommunication system when the fourth and last phase of the Japanese-assisted project was formally inaugurated recently, the national newspaper Kuensel said.

The digital telecommunication system, taken up under the National Telecommunication Development Project, was jointly inaugurated by Lyonpo Jigmi Thinley, the Chairman of the Council of Ministers who is also the Foreign Minister, and Hiroshi Hirabayashi, the Japanese Ambassador to Bhutan.

"Bhutan, until the telecommunication system as we know it today was established, was a very big country — communication between Thimpu and Yongphula meant a three-day journey. Such difficulties had caused inconveniences on the decision-making process and in many other areas, including even family affairs," said Thinley.

Today, after completion of phase four of the project, the country had advanced from relative isolation to preparedness for globalisation and cyberspace," he said, adding that it opened up vistas for telemedicine, distance education and good governance.

The Japanese envoy echoed his sentiments and said the new telecommunication project would be a catalyst in the socio-economic development of the mountainous country where topography was a challenge.

The telecommunication network comprises eight exchanges, seven remote line units (RLU) and eight digital radio concentrator systems (DRCS) among other infrastructure, according to telecom officials.

"This kind of high technology project is something the Bhutanese should feel proud of," said Seiji Komatsu, the resident representative of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) in Bhutan. "Not even Japan telecom is totally digitalised," he said. The final phase of this modern telecommunication system covers four dzongkhags (district administrators) from Gasa in the north to Phuentsholing and Samtse in the south and was completed at a cost of two billion yen, while the entire project cost more than 5.8 billion yen.

The digital telecommunication system came a week after India's External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh inaugurated the new terminal building of Paro airport here. The Indian-funded project is considered yet another milestone in Indo-Bhutan cooperation.

"India and Bhutan share many natural bonds which ensure close, enduring and lasting friendship for mutual benefit," Singh said. "Over the decades, we have set an example of mutually beneficial relations between two nations, however marked the disparity in sizes," he added.

He attributed this to the "enlightened leadership" of the two countries, especially praising the statesmanship and vision of Bhutan's King Jigme Singye Wangchuck, who had also contributed to the strengthening of regional cooperation in South Asia.

Foreign Minister Thinley

praised the Airport Authority of India and the Indian Border Roads Organisation which built the terminal at a cost of Nu 217.3 million. The splendid architecture and engineering artifice was "reflective of the genius and sensitivity with which the builders have blended traditional architecture with modern engineering concepts and standards," he said.

He also outlined the history of Indo-Bhutan cooperation, emphasising the numerous projects which helped raise the quality of life of the Bhutanese people. "Where demographic, economic and territorial asymmetries could have served to constrain mutual trust and confidence, out bilateral relations have become a model for peaceful co-existence," he said.

The new airport terminal is centrally heated and has all modern amenities, including duty-free and handicraft shops, conveyerbelts, a first-aid room, x-ray machines, a restaurant, office, close circuit security system, elevator, VIP and business class lounges and a cargo area. A special ceremonial building houses a royal lounge, VIP lounge and press lounge.

— India Abroad News Service

# Warning Bells in Sri Lanka

The Provincial Council elections in Sri Lanka, along with other recent developments, could erode the ruling alliance's support base and lead to greater political turmoil ahead. Paful Bidwai writes

Kumaratunga's ruling People's Alliance (P.A.) may be running out. The warning bells now ring loud and clear.

Nothing illustrates this more clearly than the run-up to and the results of the fraught, contentious elections to five Provincial Councils (P.Cs) on April 6. The P.A. barely managed to retain the Western province, Sri Lanka's largest and richest, with a quarter of its population and 45 per cent of its GDP. It wrested the other four from the UNP which had won them in 1993 (before the P.A. was born). But the quality of its victory was at best poor, uncertain and slippery. Worse, it came amidst strong accusations of electoral malpractices, some of them backed by independent NGOs such as the Centre for Monitoring Election Violence (CMEV).

Even if the rigging charges are discounted, the P.A.'s performance in the P.Cs marked a sharp decline in relation to the 1994 presidential elections and the 1997 elections to local bodies. Compared to 62 per cent five years ago, its vote fell to just 49 per cent in 1997, and now further down to 45 per cent. This puts it barely two percentage points ahead of the rival UNP itself, unless by great leadership, faction-ridden, and not free from the odium of long years of cynical misrule. The difference in the five P.Cs between P.A. and UNP votes is only about 126,000. This would be wiped out more than twice over by the votes rendered invalid. In the five P.Cs — Western, Central, North-

Central, Sabaragamuwa and Uva — as a whole, the P.A. won 120 seats, and the UNP 112. In Colombo district, the P.A.'s vote declined by a massive 44 per cent over 1994. In other urban areas such as Kandy, the UNP increased its vote share to come within a couple of percentage points of the P.A.s. In only one of the five P.Cs (North-Central) did the P.A. win an absolute majority of seats. Elsewhere, it can only form a government in alliance with other parties, some of them ideologically hostile.

The Provincial Council election results mark the erosion of the ruling People's Alliance's vote bank. The conduct of the polls came in for critical scrutiny from observers such as PAFEP (People's Action for Free and Fair Elections), MFE (Monitoring of Free and Fair Elections) and CMEV, especially after the P.A.'s performance during the end-January elections to the North-Western (Weyamba) P.C. These were widely acknowledged to have been badly rigged, with 1,557 incidents of violence, of which 895 took place on polling day.

These acts of violence included physical assault, intimidation, threat, removal of names from electoral rolls, booth-capturing and stuffing of ballot boxes. The P.A. was held responsible for about two-thirds of these cases. Weyamba, much like Meham in Haryana, became synonymous with unconscionable electoral malpractices, which affected a quarter of all polling centres.

Even the Election Commissioner was forced to admit that as many as 212 polling centres (of a total of 1,160) witnessed serious malpractices (although he, contradictorily, ordered a re-poll in only nine centres).

This time around, independent monitors received over 1,300 complaints during the poll campaign. The police registered 298 complaints on polling day. But the intensity of violence was much lower than at Weyamba. The CMEV claimed that the performance of a third of all polling stations it monitored was "unsatisfactory". Even if this sample is considered unrepresentative, it amounts to five per cent of all polling stations. This may not have drastically affected the party's vote outcome of the elections, but in Sri Lanka's individual candidate preference-vote system, each vote has a unique value and can alter candidate-wise outcomes.

It is regrettable that there should have been electoral malpractices in the Third World's first democracy, where adult suffrage goes back to the 1930s. And it is worse that the P.A. should have got into an ugly confrontation with independent election monitors, especially the CMEV, to the point of running a campaign against them in the pages of the state-owned Daily News.

Indeed, Kumaratunga personally attacked the CMEV as "a cat's paw" of foreign interests and UNP "agents", and questioned (at Kandy on April 1) the integrity and genealogy of one of its prominent members. It

could be argued that the CMEV at times overstated the incidence of violence, that it did not carefully distinguish between minor and serious cases, and named those accused of misdemeanour without verifying the allegations. But it is malicious to claim that it represents the UNP or foreign interests. The confrontation only lowered the P.A.'s stature and invited parallels with the "Weyamba factor", to the P.A.'s own embarrassment.

Today, the P.A. is a party largely on the defensive. It has lost much of its élan, most of its idealism, and a good deal of its appeal. It is now seen to be exercising power delinked from a larger, universal purpose. Its earlier hopes of a "new UNP", hatched by Rajiv Mervin Singhe's inability to give it political direction, would face steep erosion, and pave the way for its own upward growth, stands belied.

Besides exposing the P.A.'s weakness, recent political developments, in particular the P.C. elections, serve to highlight five significant trends. First, the votes of the ethnic-religious minorities in the south, which had swung towards the P.A. five years ago, are returning in appreciable measure to the UNP, their traditional representative. Thus, argues Dr. Neelan Tiruchelvam, the well-regarded scholar-MP and director of the International Centre for Ethics Studies, it is hard to explain the UNP's strong showing in central and northern Colombo (two-fifths of it Tamil-speaking) or in the

coastal fishing villages, without such shift. Second, in the central highlands, with their tea estate labour of Indian origin, the influence of S. Thondaman's Ceylon Workers' Congress (CWC), a P.A. constituent, is on the decline. In 1993, Thondaman allied with the UNP and won 12 seats in the tea districts. This time, the National Union of Workers sponsored by him has won only seven, with slim margins. This is partly owing to the emergence of educated and aware youth among the "Indian Tamils" (as distinct from the long-settled/indigenous "Ceylon Tamils" of the North and the East).

This layer is discontented with the CWC's paternalist conservatism, the corruption and extravagant lifestyles of its leaders, and their failure to respond to its aspiration for better educational and employment opportunities. Thus, the CWC rival, the People's Front, a CWC rival, has cut into its vote, which is shrinking with the grounding of the peace process.

A third trend is the re-emergence of the Sinhala ethnic chauvinist Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) as a significant force. The JVP was brutally crushed after its 1987-89 violent uprising, but has tripled its vote-share to five per cent since 1994. Its present vote share is 54 per cent higher than that in the 1997 local elections. The JVP is now the third largest party, with 15 of the 263 seats in the five P.Cs. This puts it in a uniquely strong position, for instance in the Western P.C., where the P.A., lacking a majority, can only form a government with the support of ideologically distant parties.

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# India's Tottering Secular Alternative

by Brig. (Rtd) M Abdul Hafiz

MAKING full use of the political power it was able to grab the Bharatiya Janata Party and its front organisations had been busy, during the most part of its 13-month rule, putting into effect its Hindutva agenda by whipping up religious emotions. The wave of atrocities on the minorities which once culminated in the demolition of Babri Mosque in December 1992 was now directed at another minuscule community. The concocted stories of the forcible conversion of the Hindus were trotted out as provocation for launching attacks on churches and missionaries. The politics of intolerance, hate and brutality took over the country. The situation had never been more grim in the history of the polity.

This being the record of the party's governance when the BJP-led coalition government was voted out of power on 17 April last, there were few regrets. On the contrary the secular camp of the country was found caught up, for a while, with visible signs of ecstasy. In the last few months, the centre-left alignments forged along well-known line had been emerging. From the beginning, the BJP's arithmetic of power remained highly deceptive but the government managed to outlast its calculated tenure by virtue of state endowed advan-

tages. It was only a matter of time that the coalition the BJP was able to cobble up would crumble throwing the party out of the power's epicentre.

It became abundantly clear that a Congress government led by Sonia Gandhi and supported by the official left, the religious minorities and some caste-based parties would at long last lead New Delhi into new millennium. Once again, like in early eighties, people were beginning to say that despite its obvious limitations only the Congress was capable of governing India with a semblance of order and control and putting the country back into its secular mould. It was evidenced through its spectacular victory in the state assembly elections held in November 1998. The Congress seemed to have recaptured its vote base in some important states and the minorities, particularly the Muslims, came back with their traditional support for the party.

Yet when the defining moment arrived the Congress and its secular allies failed to rise up to the occasion and plunged themselves into a dismal anticlimax. To the utter disappointment of the nation the secular forces of the country were in total disarray after the BJP's fall. In almost a week's time they could not reach a consensus on an alternative government which was so disparately required to clear the

state of complacency after the party's recent victory. Its traditional electoral base of the Dalits and Muslims is still to be regained from the rival secular forces who on occasions do not see eye with Congress. The clash of interests among the secular parties will sharpen where they have common vote base. The erstwhile social justice parties are also in bad shape as recent events in Karnataka suggest and Laloo Yadav, another secular stalwart in Bihar is deeply implicated in fodder scam. While there is new distance between Samajbadi Party and Congress in Uttar Pradesh, the hands of Jayalalita, Congress' new ally in Tamilnadu are stained not only with her own corruption but her support for Karasevaks during Babri Mosque crisis.

What is however the most disconcerting for the secularists in India has been the secularism's perception with the Congress itself. The Congress Working Committee was grossly opportunistic in adopting a new line on secularism in its resolution of 16 January last stating that 'Hinduism is the most effective guarantor of secularism in India' — a formulation which the Sangh Parivar has been making all along. The Congress line was laid down by Sonia Gandhi even earlier on

12 January 1999 in her speech on the anniversary of Swami Vivekananda when she said: "India is secular primarily because of Hinduism both as a philosophy and way of life." This ominous shift from emphasis on India's secular heritage to Hindu teaching was apparently Sonia Gandhi's desperate attempt to parry the Sangh Parivar's calumny on her credential as an Indian citizen. But the play in which she clearly compromised India's clearly defined multicultural heritage was both dangerous and cynical for the party.

Reportedly, the old guards of the party including the veterans like Arjun Singh, Pranab Mukherjee and VN Godse espoused the new line for the Congress and in the BJP manner opposed the minority appeasement. According to them it would be electorally expedient to steal the BJP's saffron attire while the party was still wallowing in the muddy water of state assembly electoral defeat. Hence was the rethinking on the concept of secularism itself. Much efforts, they think, were wasted over the worry why the minority constituting only 15 per cent put their back to Congress. Instead, to them it is more important now to craft response to why the majority, the 85 per cent of the voters were disenchanted with Congress. The Congress must refashion

its ideology in order to gain the appeal of the BJP. The stark truth today is that the secular ideas are under attack within the Congress and other secular parties, barring a few, are hardly serious about it. The Congress leaders confess at least in private that many Congressmen collaborated with RSS Karasevaks before and during the Babri Mosque demolition. The episode took place under the nose of Narasima Rao's Congress government at the centre. Both Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi fouled up the party and its secular ideology while wooing the electorate with the promises of 'Ram Rajya'.

The Congress credential of secularism has never been above the board. Jawaharlal Nehru wrote in his autobiography as early as in 1936: 'Many a Congressman was communalist under the nationalist cloak'. After independence he publicly complained of Congressmen talking in a communal voice. In 1958 he told the AICC that the "Communalism of the majority is far more dangerous than the communalism of the minority because the former is apt to be taken for nationalism." This is what the Sangh Parivar is up to and the new Congress of today is also unfortunately inclined to do the same for its revival. As a result the ideological distance between the two is practically obliterated.